United Nations A/C.1/59/PV.7

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-ninth session

First Committee

7th meeting

Tuesday, 12 October 2004, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. De Alba ..... (Mexico)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 72 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): As I am taking the floor for the first time, Sir, permit me to associate my delegation with the warm sentiments expressed by others regarding your election as Chairman of this Committee. I am confident that, under your guidance, the work of the Committee will proceed smoothly to a successful conclusion. Naturally, our congratulations are also extended to other members of the Bureau as well, who will be assisting you in your delicate and challenging work. You can rest assured of the support and cooperation of my delegation in the task ahead.

The euphoria that greeted the end of the cold war with regard to disarmament has long waned. Despite the collective efforts that have been made towards disarmament and non-proliferation, this global village is as unsafe as it was decades ago, if not worse. The old threat has been exacerbated by the alarming rise of new challenges. That has placed an unparalleled responsibility on the community of nations to rededicate itself to the quest for comprehensive global security. We therefore urge member States to eschew parochial interests in order to attain an amicable and constructive consensus. After all, no country or region is insulated from the dire security challenges of the twenty-first century.

In the face of such threats and challenges, we cannot but be concerned at the gradual gravitation towards unilateralism in disarmament and continue to hold the principled position that multilaterally concluded solutions are the only means of achieving a comprehensive and sustainable agreement.

In that context, my delegation is concerned about the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to reach an accord on its programme of work. That is an indictment of our collective responsibility and could undermine the Conference's position as the sole multilateral forum in the field of disarmament. The importance of the Disarmament Commission has been lucidly and eloquently stated over the years; I cannot but re-echo that position. The difficulties confronting the Commission are also indicative of growing uncertainties about the whole disarmament agenda of the post-cold-war era. Unless concrete efforts are made to address the stalemate, the Disarmament Commission could be plunged into an irredeemable abyss. The attainment of a consensus, on the other hand, would rekindle confidence in the work of the Commission for the efficient execution of its mandated functions as a universal deliberative body of the General Assembly.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and, in juxtaposition with disarmament, constitutes an indispensable element in the pursuit of global security. However, that objective can be realized only if the Treaty attains universality and if all States parties without exception avoid

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

selectivity and faithfully comply with and implement its provisions. The discriminatory proposition that some countries can be entrusted with nuclear weapons while others cannot is difficult to defend. We would be undermining both the spirit and letter of the NPT if non-nuclear States were to continue to abide by the non-proliferation regime while some States remained free to acquire nuclear weapons and others further improved on their destructive capability and continued to display them as an enviable source of power and respectability in international politics. The disparate positions on fundamental issues at the third session of the NPT Preparatory Committee were regrettable and we encourage member States to relentlessly strive to overcome the issues of contention, since the outcome of the Review Conference will have an enormous impact on the global nuclear-weapons regime.

Ghana regards the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as crucial to efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and, by extension, nuclear disarmament. Thus, we are disheartened by the abeyance of the Treaty and entreat States, particularly the 11 whose ratification is paramount for the Treaty to enter into force, to ratify it sooner rather than later. While awaiting the realization of that ultimate goal, Ghana urges nuclear-weapon States to maintain the current moratorium on nuclear testing.

My delegation shares the concerns of most member States regarding the threat of the acquisition by terrorist groups of weapons of mass destruction. It is on that premise that we view with great concern reports of opposition to the inclusion of provisions on inspection and verification in the fissile material cut-off treaty. In our view, any treaty devoid of credible verification and inspection provisions will not attain the goal of denying terrorist groups the acquisition of plutonium and enriched uranium.

It is the considered view of Ghana that nuclear-weapon-free zones are critical components of the cause of non-proliferation and global nuclear disarmament. Our efforts will, however, be to no avail without the support of the nuclear-weapon States, which are required to respect the underlying objectives of those agreements and to abide by their provisions.

It is deserving, and rightly so, that weapons of mass destruction remain the main focus of attention. However, we should not be oblivious to the havoc being wreaked in diverse areas of conflict worldwide through the use of conventional weapons. The eradication of anti-personnel mines in Africa has been unequivocally strengthened by the recent adoption of a common position by our foreign ministers for the forthcoming Nairobi summit. We hope that the necessary resources will be made available for that collective aspiration to attain fruition.

With the general malaise in the disarmament process, it is imperative that this Committee be revitalized to enable it efficiently to execute its responsibility. We support the reform process, but we are of the view that it should focus primarily on creating the requisite environment to enable the Committee to pursue its cardinal responsibility in the field of disarmament. Undoubtedly, the challenges are daunting, but surmountable.

It is my fervent hope that the monumental achievements in science and technology will be utilized for the common benefit of humankind and not to aggravate fears of an Armageddon. It behoves our Organization, and indeed this Committee, to achieve that laudable aspiration. We cannot and should not betray the trust reposed in us.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I am especially pleased to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We assure you and the members of the Bureau of our support and full cooperation as you undertake your work.

The new international context that has been established in recent years has highlighted the importance of the role of the United Nations in disarmament and international security. Today, we are more than ever aware of the need to strengthen the role of international law and States' respect for disarmament and non-proliferation accords and treaties.

Tunisia has always believed that the arms race is often pursued to the detriment of the most basic needs of civilian populations and their development. My country has always acted on the basis of that conviction. We feel that multilateralism is the fundamental principle that should guide negotiations in disarmament and non-proliferation. In that context, Tunisia supports all international and regional efforts in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. We call for the adoption of measures to eliminate nuclear weapons and to strengthen international security, since

any attempt to remove the multilateral element from nuclear disarmament would undermine the binding legal instruments and political commitments already adopted.

With that in mind, and aware of its obligations, on 23 September 2004 Tunisia deposited its instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Moreover, in 2004 Tunisia organized a workshop for the countries of North Africa, in cooperation with the Preparatory Commission for CTBT.

Difficulties continue to hamper the disarmament process: the CTBT is still not in force; the verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention has not been adopted; and the Conference on Disarmament — the sole body for multilateral negotiation on disarmament — has continued for several years to experience difficulties in establishing a programme of work. Another indicator of the state in which international community finds itself in this area is the failure of Member States to reach a consensus on the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. In addition, the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference for NPT has been unable to agree on an agenda, thus preventing the Conference President from beginning consultations on the schedule.

In the face of the current situation, and while awaiting the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon States have the right to ask for effective guarantees against the use or threat of use of such weapons against the security and integrity of their countries, which have voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons.

The Middle East is perhaps one of the most tension-filled areas, owing to the refusal of Israel, a non-declared nuclear-weapon State, to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear installations under the comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency nuclear safeguards regime unconditionally, despite the numerous appeals made by the other countries of the region, as well as by the General Assembly in its many resolutions on that issue. Israel's obstinacy is an obstacle to disarmament in general, and to the establishment of lasting peace in the region in particular, and is reflected in the policy of excessive militarization being pursued by Israel — a country that also possesses other particularly deadly weapons. Faced with that threat, it is not reasonable today to approach a situation such as this — in such a sensitive region — on the basis of double standards. In that regard, we call upon the international community, especially the Powers with the ability to be influential, to take credible measures to oblige Israel to meet its international obligations.

Aware of the full importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and of its beneficial effect for international peace and stability and for civilian populations throughout the world, Tunisia quickly ratified the Convention and has completed the destruction of all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, which testifies to its commitment to eliminate that category of inhuman weapons.

In another arena, the adoption in July 2001 of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was an important step forward in multilateral disarmament. In that connection, Tunisia, in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, organized a workshop for States of the Arab Maghreb — held on 14 and 15 June 2004 in Tunis — on the presentation of the reports to be submitted in accordance with the Programme of Action.

Tunisia is playing an active role in the promotion of peace and security within the various political arenas with which we are affiliated, in particular in the Arab Maghreb Union and in the Middle East. In Africa, Tunisia has contributed and continues to contribute to the restoration and consolidation of peace and security through its participation in peacekeeping operations. My country is also working consistently towards the success of the European Union's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative, as a contribution to cooperation and solidarity between the two shores of the Mediterranean. That approach is helping to strengthen the Mediterranean partnership to address the security and economic challenges the region faces.

My country will continue to play its role in promoting the cause of peace and disarmament.

Mr. Kau (Fiji): Mr. Chairman, I join others in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee on your election and extend my delegation's wishes for a fruitful and

successful session under your able leadership. You can be assured of our full cooperation and support.

We now find ourselves in a new and complex security environment brought about by the emergence of new threats, weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism. While the world and the international community are deeply concerned, and while the public cries out, no immediate solution seems to be in sight. Consolation, however, can be found in the increasing international recognition of and support for the broad objectives of disarmament: the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the regulation of conventional weapons.

As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, the importance of maintaining the credibility and integrity of the United Nations as the most effective multilateral venue for addressing issues of security and international peace is crucial. However, and sad to say, less progress has been achieved of late within the United Nations machinery and within the international peace and security framework. Member States continue to be divided on crucial disarmament and security issues, and cooperation has been hard to achieve. In that regard, Fiji supports efforts to review and reform the working methods of the First Committee within the context of the United Nations reform and revitalization programme, in order, inter alia, to ensure the strengthening of multilateralism and international cooperation in that area. We subscribe to the belief that multilateralism is a core principle in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and that effective progress can be achieved when the legitimate concerns of Member States are carefully considered and addressed and when universal norms are adopted. The continued involvement of the Security Council in addressing those threats is also important.

As a small island developing State and as a strong advocate of international peacekeeping, Fiji is committed to the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and relies on the multilateral forum of this Committee to play a critical role in addressing the current challenges and ensuring further progress in the area. Our efforts, we hope, will assist in the realization of a peaceful and safe nuclear-free world.

As an active member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Fiji has been working energetically on the regional front to ensure a collective regional approach to the issue of disarmament. The Forum has continuously expressed its stand on issues such as weapons control legislation, the shipment of radioactive materials and the establishment of nuclear-free-zones. In the area of weapons control, the region is drafting legislation to ensure public safety by imposing strict controls on the importation, possession and use of firearms, ammunition and related material. The shipment of radioactive material through our region has long been an issue. In that regard, the region has reiterated its concerns about possible economic loss in a non-release situation and is seeking further assurance from the parties concerned. Our region also welcomes the recent assurance by shipping States that they will take all practicable actions to assist in dealing with accidents if they occur in our waters. With respect to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, we continue to call on those that have yet to ratify the Protocols to the Treaty to do so, as a means of enhancing global and regional peace and security and global nuclear non-proliferation.

On small arms and light weapons, Fiji and the region have been steadfast in their resolve to strengthen control over arms transfers and usage. Fiji played host to a United Nations regional small arms and light weapons workshop in Nadi in August 2004. The workshop was sponsored by Australia and Japan with the assistance of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. We hope that many useful lessons were learned at the workshop to assist and guide national plans and strategies.

Leaders of our region continue to remind the international community of the plight of the islands in the region caused by the radioactive contamination resulting from nuclear-weapon testing. We hope that those responsible will live up to their obligations and support efforts to rehabilitate and transform the lives of the peoples affected by their actions on those islands.

Fiji continues to be concerned about the surge in weapons and military expenditures, which inevitably has a great impact on commitments to social and economic development. Health, education, poverty eradication and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will continue to be affected. We believe that disarmament and development must complement each another and that the international community must continue to keep the development agenda at the top of its priorities as a means to ensure

the enhancement of international security and long-term stability.

Moreover, we are increasingly aware of the threat of weapons of mass destruction getting into the hands of terrorists. It is critical that Member States and the international community cooperate in efforts to ensure that strict controls are in place to alleviate that threat. In response to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), Pacific island leaders have moved to ensure that all countries in the region have legislative provisions to address terrorism, transnational organized crime, weapons control and transport security. There are also moves to conduct a regional counter-terrorism contingency planning exercise.

We firmly believe that there is sufficient goodwill and cooperation among Member States and within the United Nations to bring about progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. While challenges will continue to confront us, effective strategies based on international cooperation and multilateralism will ensure our great success.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to join previous speakers in expressing our heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We wish you every success. We should also like to congratulate the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur on their election. We are fully confident that, under your leadership and with the cooperation of the other Bureau members, our work will be crowned with success. In addition, I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his efforts concerning disarmament issues and for the statement he made at the first meeting of the First Committee's current session. We wish him every success.

The majority of Committee members hope that we will narrow the differences existing among us and that we will reach agreed solutions on issues related to international peace and security. Since we represent the peoples of the world, we have the humanitarian and moral obligation to reach common formulas and approaches aimed at saving humanity from the death and ruin caused by the use of weapons of mass destruction.

It is truly unfortunate that countries possessing those banned weapons remain determined to keep and even to develop them. It is obvious from their resolve to maintain weapons of mass destruction that those countries — especially the major Powers — want to retain their monopoly on such weapons and to prevent proliferation under the pretext of the destructive danger posed to humanity. That is a strange equation which is difficult to understand and accept. Nevertheless, my delegation would like to see the countries that possess such weapons abandon them voluntarily in order to preserve life on our planet. The possession of weapons of mass destruction is a form of terrorism with which countries flex their muscles and intimidate neighbouring or competing countries, threatening them with destruction. It is the worst thing that human beings have invented for mass self-destruction.

Since we are discussing the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, I should like here to refer to the agenda item before the Committee on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Middle East has long been an inflamed region because of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine and Syria. That has caused a clear imbalance of power in favour of Israel, which is determined to strengthen its nuclear might and arsenal.

As it did at previous sessions, the General Assembly at the fifty-eighth session called upon all parties in the Middle East to seriously consider urgent practical steps aimed at implementing the proposal to create a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The Assembly called upon all countries of the region that had not yet done so to subject all their nuclear activities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). All of the countries of the region responded to those appeals and joined the relevant agreements except Israel, which remains outside the international framework, unaccountable and exempt from international pressure, which is applied to countries in an explicitly selective and unacceptable manner.

With regard to issues related to weapons of mass destruction and the need to eliminate them, I must note that chemical and biological weapons, small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel landmines and booby traps, and particularly their proliferation, pose a continuing threat to human beings, to their security and to sustainable development in general, especially when control of such weapons cannot be maintained. Therefore, it is important that we focus on the need to implement the relevant conventions and to show no leniency in enforcing implementation. We believe it essential to urge and encourage all countries to join the

conventions regulating the possession of such weapons. We also call on countries that manufacture such weapons not to take advantage of the loopholes in those conventions by developing weapons not covered by them.

As a result of Qatar's commitment and adherence to international treaties and conventions, Sheikh Tamim Ben Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, Deputy Emir and heir apparent of the State of Qatar, endorsed on 4 October 2004 a resolution establishing a national committee to ban weapons. The resolution mandates the committee with the following tasks: first, offering advice and consultation to relevant Government bodies on all matters related to the prohibition of weapons of all kinds, including nuclear, biological, toxin, chemical and conventional weapons; second, examining international agreements prohibiting weapons and rendering an opinion as to the appropriateness of joining them; third, working to attain the objectives set out in the relevant international agreements signed or ratified by the country banning weapons of all kinds; fourth, proposing legislation and measures needed to implement the relevant international treaties; fifth, reviewing national legislation on weapons and weapons trafficking and proposing means to develop and amend such legislation; sixth, preparing and submitting to international organizations reports on weapons bans, in accordance with the relevant agreements and international resolutions; seventh, preparing and implementing programmes needed to raise awareness of the provisions of international treaties banning weapons; and eighth, participating in delegations representing the State in conferences and on committees related to disarmament.

I would also like to recall that Qatar has ratified the 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and has joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Governments and States need to employ the concept of confidence-building to stop the arms race and the development of new weapons. Moreover, mistrust and fear of others is what makes countries compete in possessing the most modern and deadliest weapons. My delegation believes that the best way to control and stop the arms race is to seek a solution to the difficult political problems of this world and to persuade warring parties to resort to dialogue and resolve their problems politically as soon as possible before situations deteriorate.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): The end of the cold war during the closing years of last century generated widespread hope for peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, such hope for a peace dividend was short-lived. The twenty-first century dawned as the last century did, with a world beset by conflict and destruction among and within States. What is different today is that globalization has made every conflict and every catastrophe international in its impact and implications. There is no coherent global policy to regulate armaments, arrest proliferation and promote disarmament.

Today, threats to peace and challenges to arms control and disarmament arise from several sources. International terrorism and the possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) by terrorists constitute a threat to all States, including the most powerful. This resort to the asymmetric instrument of terrorism is, at least in part, a consequence of growing asymmetry in power and the inability of the international system to eliminate political injustice and the unjust oppression of peoples in many parts of the world, especially in the Islamic world. While the international campaign against terrorism has been effective and cooperation to combat terrorism is growing, we have yet to initiate a comprehensive strategy to address and eliminate its root causes.

Pakistan agrees that all efforts must be made to prevent terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring and using WMDs. In our view, the conclusion of a non-discriminatory and universal treaty would be the most effective instrument to counter that threat. We agreed to the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004) by the Security Council as an interim measure to foster national action by Member States to prevent the acquisition of WMD capability by non-State actors, particularly terrorists.

We in Pakistan have adopted comprehensive measures to prevent WMD proliferation. We have taken effective steps, in cooperation with the international community, to eliminate an underground proliferation network that had tentacles in two dozen countries. We are cooperating closely with the

International Atomic Energy Agency in that endeavour, and urge other countries to do likewise.

Pakistan has adopted wide-ranging measures to ensure foolproof security for its nuclear and strategic assets. Four years ago, we established a Nuclear Command and Control Authority, which is responsible for our strategic assets — assets that are vital for our strategic deterrence posture. We have also created a Nuclear Regulatory Authority for the safe operation of civilian nuclear plants. We have elaborated legislation to implement our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Last month, our Parliament promulgated a comprehensive export control act to deal with nuclear and biological weapons and their material, goods, technologies, equipment and means of delivery. Salient elements of our new law include: prohibiting the diversion of controlled goods and technologies, including re-export, transshipment and transit; licensing and record-keeping; export control lists; and penal provisions of up to 14 years imprisonment and a fine of 5 million rupees. We are confident that there will be no proliferation of WMDs from Pakistan.

While the threat of WMD terrorism creates fear and foreboding, people are suffering and dying every day as a result of small wars conducted mainly with small arms. A host of complex crises in Africa and other parts of the developing world are threatening national and international security, creating major humanitarian emergencies and neutralizing economic progress. A host of measures have been initiated to address those crises, including the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. These crises need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner through conflict resolution, ending external intervention and halting the illegal exploitation of natural resources that motivates and fuels many of these conflicts.

There are other regional situations that portend even greater danger. In the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli confrontation is aggravated by the threat of proliferation and use of WMDs. Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East needs to be addressed in a comprehensive and cooperative framework. No one can ignore that nuclear weapons and their means of delivery already exist in the region. We trust that the current controversy relating to the nuclear programme of a country in the region will be addressed in a cooperative framework. We support the fulfilment of international obligations by all States. We also support the objective of creating a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East.

It is essential to prevent the emergence of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and avoid an extended arms race with grave portents for peace and stability in North-East Asia. We support the six-party talks initiated and hosted by China. Concerted efforts must be made to ensure the success of the talks with the objective of ensuring a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons and addressing the security concerns and economic aspirations of all the States concerned.

In South Asia, the security environment has visibly improved in recent months with the initiation of a composite dialogue between India and Pakistan. We believe that durable peace and security in South Asia will require an earnest effort to resolve outstanding disputes, particularly on Jammu and Kashmir, promote mutual nuclear restraint and maintain a balance of conventional forces between Pakistan and India.

Peace and security is an important item on the agenda of the composite dialogue. Both countries are committed to working for strategic stability. They have declared that their nuclear capability is a factor for stability in South Asia. They are committed to taking the measures necessary to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. We have agreed on a number of nuclear confidence-building measures, including the improvement of hotlines, prior notification of missile flight tests and the reaffirmation of our unilateral test moratoriums. Further confidence-building measures are to be discussed.

Pakistan believes that several other, more ambitious, measures for mutual nuclear and missile restraint can be agreed, including the following: maintenance of nuclear weapons on de-alert status; no operational deployment of nuclear ballistic missiles; no acquisition or deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems; and avoidance of a nuclear and missile arms race.

The crisis of the nuclear non-proliferation regime arises not only from the apparent intention of some States to acquire nuclear weapons, but, even more, from the tension between nuclear legality and nuclear reality. This tension is apparent in three major areas.

First, the five nuclear-weapon States have undertaken a legal commitment, under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to achieve nuclear disarmament. Some progress has been made towards reducing strategic arsenals, but over 20,000 nuclear weapons are still held, mostly on high alert, by the two largest nuclear-weapon States. Moreover, it seems clear that the nuclear Powers intend to retain their nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future. A credible programme for nuclear disarmament, within a reasonable time frame, is indispensable to reviving the essential bargain which is at the heart of the NPT. Any regime which seeks to perpetuate discrimination and ignores the vital security interests of the majority of States cannot be sustained indefinitely.

Secondly, the NPT recognizes only five nuclear-weapon States. In reality, there are three other States which posses nuclear weapons. Those three States are also unlikely to give up their nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future outside the framework of a programme of global nuclear disarmament or regional arms control and conflict resolution. In their joint statement in June, Pakistan and India declared that their nuclear capabilities are essential for regional stability. Endeavours to insist on their adherence to the NPT as non-nuclear States are unrealistic. Attempts to persuade them through penal measures or technology denial are likely to be fruitless and could damage the prospects of creating a credible global non-proliferation regime. Unless the cooperation of the three nuclear-weapon States that remain outside the NPT is evoked through mutual agreement, there will remain a gaping hole in the NPT regime. We note with interest that the IAEA Director General recently called for the inclusion of the three non-NPT nuclear States in future talks on non-proliferation and disarmament.

Thirdly, the NPT bargain essentially involved the acceptance by the non-nuclear parties of the temporary retention of nuclear weapons by five nuclear-weapon States in exchange for the promise of nuclear disarmament and of full cooperation in the development and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Since the nature of such peaceful nuclear cooperation was not elaborated in the NPT, many of the advanced non-nuclear parties have developed or acquired the complete nuclear fuel cycle, including the enrichment and reprocessing technologies that create the capability for nuclear-weapons development.

The international community is now belatedly concerned about the spread of those sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle to other States, even under international safeguards. It is clear that such double discrimination is difficult to justify. An equitable solution must be found through political and technological means, not by coercion or the use of force. We believe that the experts group convened by the IAEA Director General should evolve practical solutions to ensuring the safety of the nuclear fuel cycle. Meanwhile, political steps, including security assurances, may offer the means to regulate the sensitive parts of the nuclear cycle in civilian nuclear programmes. We suggest the convening of an international conference to address and remove the current tensions between nuclear legality and nuclear reality in the three areas I have outlined.

There are several other worrying aspects on the global proliferation and disarmament scene. First is the absence of international agreement on missiles. Unfortunately, the Hague Code of Conduct does not address the concerns of several militarily significant States. Secondly, there are the dangers which may arise from "war fighting" nuclear doctrines and reports regarding the further qualitative development of "useable" nuclear weapons. Thirdly, there is the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems. Fourthly, there is the steady militarization of outer space.

It is obvious that those global challenges to stability, disarmament and non-proliferation can be addressed only in multilateral negotiations. The complex of disarmament and non-proliferation threats in the regional and global contexts has never been greater. There is no substitute for multilateral legal norms that enjoy universal legality or acceptance, even if the negotiation of international treaties with effective verification provisions is often time consuming and complex. Freely negotiated international treaties are the necessary sheet anchor for effective arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Decisions promulgated in exclusive and limited bodies representing the views, interests and perspectives of the few and the powerful do not enjoy universal commitment and are thus lacking in the legitimacy that can be offered only by international treaties.

Therefore, it is now imperative to revive the Conference on Disarmament and to restore its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on

disarmament. The impasse in the Conference on Disarmament is artificial, in our judgement. We are unable to decipher the reluctance of some to simultaneously address the issues of proliferation and disarmament. The work programme of the Conference must include the negotiation of a fissile material treaty, encompassing existing stockpiles and an effective verification mechanism. It must also include measures to prevent the militarization of outer space and the negotiation of a realistic programme of nuclear disarmament. Moreover, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States can provide a most effective tool to reduce the incentives for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The desire to address comprehensively the major threats to international security and disarmament within the Conference on Disarmament cannot be dismissed as linkages. On the contrary, it is only such a comprehensive and global approach to disarmament and non-proliferation that can elicit the support of the international community.

We support efforts to improve the effectiveness of the working methods of the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the First Committee. Such efforts must involve, first and foremost, the revival of the Conference on Disarmament to play its assigned role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum. It must also involve the full utilization of the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee for discussion of major disarmament and non-proliferation problems. Those deliberative bodies can serve to develop the basis for the negotiation of international agreements on various outstanding and emerging threats of proliferation and challenges to genuine disarmament. They must not be marginalized.

Finally, as regards the First Committee, we believe that its reform efforts must be pursued within the following parameters. First, the political role of the First Committee must be enhanced. Secondly, the approach should be incremental and build upon progressive steps. Thirdly, there should be better and more efficient time management. Fourthly, all decisions must be reached by consensus.

However, truncated change is likely to introduce distortions in the functioning of the Assembly. Efforts to improve the functioning of the First Committee should not be divorced from the measures under consideration for the revitalization of the General Assembly and its other Committees.

Mr. Jha (Nepal): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Committee. I also take this opportunity to extend our warm felicitations to the other members of the Bureau. My delegation commends the work that the outgoing Chairman accomplished at the last session of the Committee.

I would also like to place on record my sincere appreciation for the thoughtful remarks made earlier in the session by Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, on the persisting problems in the field of disarmament and international security.

Our common objective to find durable peace is predicated on eliminating weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, as well as on ensuring that credible and sufficient curbs are placed on small arms and light weapons. Durable peace requires the complete eradication of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles; the effective control of small arms and light weapons; and the promotion of a culture of peace.

The international community's efforts to advance the cause of disarmament, however, have never gone without a hitch. While some progress has been registered with respect to disarmament in the area of chemical and biological weapons, nuclear weapons remain a persistent and devastating threat to human civilization. Controls over small arms and light weapon remain inadequate.

Nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to human civilization — even to the existence of humanity on this planet. The complete removal of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth in a time-bound manner must therefore be the foremost priority on the disarmament agenda. In this context, Nepal stresses the need to implement the 13 practical steps contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is now extremely urgent. Genuine compliance with article VI of the NPT by the nuclear-weapon States, in particular, is a sine qua non for durable peace.

There is no doubt that disarmament and non-proliferation need to go hand in hand. No non-nuclear-

weapon State should engage in the proliferation of deadly nuclear arms. At the same time, nuclear-weapon States must also prove to the world that they are committed to nuclear disarmament, which will persuade non-nuclear-weapon States to abandon their nuclear ambitions.

It is disheartening that there is no encouraging progress on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or the fissile material cut-off treaty. We fervently hope that substantive work on a fissile material cut-off treaty will start without further delay.

Nepal believes that countries should be able to engage in the peaceful use of nuclear technology under non-discriminatory safeguards. It is equally important that such countries comply with the applicable International Atomic Energy Agency verification measures.

As an ardent believer in peace, Nepal supports nuclear-weapon-free zones. We also stress the necessity of keep outer space free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Although much progress has been made in controlling biological and chemical weapons, we are still far from achieving the complete disarmament of arsenals of such weapons. We must work relentlessly to strengthen the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention with comprehensive, reliable and robust verification measures. Efforts should be constantly exerted to ensure that no country derogates from the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this time of worldwide terrorism, it is absolutely vital that the world community join forces to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the wrong hands. The threat of terrorists gaining access to such deadly weapons and using them is no longer hypothetical.

Missile proliferation has become a major cause of concern for the international community and needs to be controlled in an effective manner. Nepal encourages the Panel of Governmental Experts to make extra efforts in order to reach consensus on a final report when it next meets.

The prevailing situation underscores the urgency of preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. It is equally important that the seabed and Antarctica remain free from all weapons.

It is disconcerting that, over the past few years, the multilateral disarmament mechanisms have been experiencing a crisis. There is a stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There has been a serious erosion of the commitments of the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their deadly arsenals.

To our dismay, even progress on the much-hyped bilateral tracks appears to have stalled. Strategic treaties have been ditched. New doctrines have been introduced to stage a nuclear comeback — a phenomenon which is certain to trigger an arms race anew.

Little progress has been made within the framework of the agreed arrangements in reducing the huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons or the capacity for destruction.

Undoubtedly, the overall picture of disarmament efforts is bleak. Yet we see a glimmer of hope in the domain of small arms and light weapons due to the almost unanimous commitment of the global community to implement the Programme of Action with a view to curbing such arsenals. The ongoing negotiation for an international instrument on identifying and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons is a welcome initiative. However, there is a need to engage in extensive consultations with the wider membership regarding the nature of that instrument.

Nepal has been suffering from the destabilizing effects of small arms and light weapons. The so-called Maoists have been using such arms to brutalize and kill innocent people, as well as to destroy private property and public infrastructure. We are taking a number of concrete actions in the implementation of the Programme of Action, including by amending and strictly enforcing our domestic laws and regulations.

Our national report on implementation is under active preparation. Nepal is of the view that transparency in the area of armaments is crucial to confidence-building among States. In that respect, measures of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms should be further expanded, while ensuring an equal degree of rights and obligations for all States. Similarly, we encourage the panel of

Government experts to maintain full transparency in order to attain its objectives.

We are concerned about the increasing proliferation of anti-personnel landmines; their indiscriminate use in conflict zones is causing serious human casualties. As this problem is related to humanitarian concerns and the legitimate security concerns of sovereign States, a proper balance between the two would be in order.

I wish to reiterate Nepal's full commitment to host in Kathmandu the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. We also urge that the Kathmandu process be revived as a logical step towards the early relocation of that Centre to Kathmandu.

In concluding, we fully agree that there is a need for initiating reforms in various United Nations organs, including the First Committee. Such reforms, however, should be integral to the comprehensive revitalization of the General Assembly and lead to the overall strengthening of the system, not to tilting or weakening it. We look forward to a constructive engagement in this exercise.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am fully confident that your wisdom and diplomatic skills will guide our deliberations to a fruitful outcome.

The aspirations and desire of humankind for a new, just and peaceful century are still thwarted by grave challenges. Unilateralism, based on the supremacy of power, ruthlessly destroys the norms and order of international relations.

What cannot be overlooked, moreover, is that weapons of mass destruction — including nuclear weapons levelled at sovereign States — are deployed throughout the world, and that the theory of preemptive nuclear strikes is now being put into action with lightning acceleration in development of new types of nuclear weapons.

Thirty-six years ago, the nuclear-weapon States committed themselves to abolishing their nuclear weapons, while emphasizing nuclear non-proliferation. That commitment has enabled the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be maintained so far.

However, the nuclear super-Power, far from abolishing nuclear weapons, has been developing new types of nuclear weapons and even expanding the nuclear arms race into outer space. The advent of new types of space weapons, such as satellite radar weapons in pursuit of a national missile defence system, is casting dark clouds threatening a nuclear arms race and raising the possibility of a space war.

In essence the nuclear super-Power has abused the NPT in order to achieve its absolute security by threatening and blackmailing non-nuclear-weapons States with nuclear weapons at the cost of their security. It cannot be acceptable to anyone that a country advocates nuclear non-proliferation while it accumulates nuclear weapons in one corner of the globe and seeks their qualitative improvement.

In order to achieve substantial disarmament and ensure lasting peace on Earth, the international community should set primary tasks to achieve the solution of the issue, based on precise analysis.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is of the view that the core issue of disarmament is nuclear disarmament and that the fundamental task in achieving nuclear disarmament is the real abandonment by the nuclear super-Power of its policy of nuclear threats.

At present, the main cause of the destruction of international peace and security that also has a serious impact on the disarmament process is none other than the nuclear super-Power's policy of nuclear threats, based on highhandedness and unilateralism. Countries are designated as comprising an "axis of evil" and are thus targets for preemptive nuclear strikes, while unilateral military attacks against sovereign States are perpetrated under the pretext of suspicion over the possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Such a designation is nothing but an artificial pretext to realize the policy of nuclear threat by a nuclear super-Power aimed at controlling the world by maintaining nuclear supremacy and nuclear threats. The developments in Iraq proved this.

The substantial and grave threat of weapons of mass destruction that is endangering international peace and security comes from none other than the nuclear super-Power which possesses the largest nuclear arsenal and is the largest exporter of arms.

If the international community attaches importance to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and does not want the existing international agreements on disarmament to be nullified or weakened, it should address the policy of nuclear threats by the nuclear super-Power and take realistic measures to eliminate it. Pursuing the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction while turning a blind eye to the essence of the issue constitutes an escape from reality and an evasion of responsibility.

It is the consistent position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to oppose the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. If such proliferation is to be prevented, it is necessary, first of all, to prohibit the deployment of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, around the world and to eliminate such nuclear threats as the doctrine of preemptive use. Furthermore nuclear non-proliferation requires a halt to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and achieving the complete dismantling of nuclear weapons. Only when nuclear disarmament and the abolishment of nuclear weapons is realized can the objective of disarmament be said to have been attained. Nuclear disarmament should therefore be the primary goal, in order to ensure the complete elimination of the use of nuclear weapons, their total abolishment and the provision of unconditional nuclear negative assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

It would be inappropriate to speak of disarmament as long as there are nuclear weapons on this planet, the nuclear arms race continues and the efforts of the United Nations to set up a collective security system are not able to bring about the desired results. If there is connivance in or tolerance of the brigandish doctrine that only big countries can have nuclear weapons and use them to attack or threaten small countries, there will be no essential change in the international order.

The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, which is the current focus of international attention, is the outcome of the United States policy on nuclear threats, which is based on its deep-rooted hostile policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which has persisted for more than half a century. If the United States had not listed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the "axis of evil", and named it as a target for nuclear pre-emptive strikes, thus aggravating the situation, the question of our nuclear deterrence would not have arisen.

The consistent position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is to adhere to the objective of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully, through dialogue and negotiations. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, proceeding from its sincere desire to contribute to peace and security on the Korean peninsula, in North-East Asia and in the rest of the world, recently advanced flexible proposals to break through the current deadlock in the nuclear issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and achieve realistic results.

Our proposal of the "reward for freeze" approach, the first phase of action in the package solution based on the principle of simultaneous action, is the only way to settle the nuclear issue on a step-by-step basis, as it fully reflects the reality of the lack of confidence between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

If the United States commits itself to dropping its hostile policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and takes direct measures to "reward for freeze", on the principle of "word to word" and "action to action", the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula will be resolved smoothly. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will do its utmost to remove external threats and ensure a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula in the future as well.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I wish to join previous speakers, Sir, in sincerely congratulating you on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee as well as in congratulating the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in ensuring the success of your mandate.

We are here, once again, at this annual session, to assess the actions carried out in the pursuit of our common goals and to harmonize our views on ways and means to give new impetus to international cooperation in the fields of disarmament and international security. At this stage of our journey, we have good reason to ask ourselves questions. During the past year, have we achieved decisive progress in building a safer world? Have we become more aware of the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs),

which are jeopardizing the existence of humankind as a whole? Have we come back to this forum more determined to prevent their proliferation and to totally eliminate them once and for all? It is difficult for my delegation to give a positive response to those questions when we observe the continued deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, the development of new generations of weapons, the increased threat of terrorism and the worrisome increase in military expenditures, which, in the last two years, have reached almost $1 trillion.

Despite those striking facts, my country still wants to believe that the international community will be able to break out of this deadlock and avoid the failure of its peace initiatives. In this respect, we are convinced that an analysis of the various disarmament issues must entail the continuous adaptation of multilateral disarmament mechanisms to take into account the international environment and existing strategies.

The role of the multilateral disarmament institutions is more important than ever. We need to ensure that those institutions respect strict norms guaranteeing the legitimacy and effectiveness of their actions. Above all, we need to avoid assuming commitments that we will not fulfil or making statements of no practical relevance. In other words, we need universal accession to multilateral treaties and their full implementation through the adoption of strong safeguards in the nuclear realm. These treaties need to be supported through effective verification mechanisms.

Here, we appeal to all States to take action to build the political will to overcome the obstacles that are preventing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We need, moreover, to make a greater effort to eliminate the threat of biological weapons, and, more generally speaking, to effectively eradicate stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, including fissile materials. That is the surest way of preventing such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Since the end of the Second World War, the international community has focused its attention on nuclear weapons. However, small conventional weapons continue to claim tens of millions of victims throughout the world. The proliferation and illicit trafficking of these arms is a phenomenon that affects the African continent, and West Africa in particular. It destabilizes States, spreads terror among peoples and prevents all economic and social growth. My delegation emphasizes that, in order to effectively fight this awful scourge, it is vital to promote, both on the regional as well as international levels, dynamic cooperation and to guarantee the effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In the context of the Programme of Action, the West African initiative — the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium — is a valuable experience which should be further supported with a view to its transformation into a regional convention. This is an ideal opportunity for my delegation to thank and encourage the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. To allow the Group to better deal with the resolution of this delicate issue, it is up to States to adopt policies that improve and strengthen controls on the circulation of small arms and light weapons.

When it comes to the question of anti-personnel landmines in Africa, the efforts aimed at eradicating that danger are hampered by a lack of technical assistance and a lack of resources made available to the States affected. In that context, my delegation reiterates the appeal made at the Conference of African Experts on Landmines, held in September 2004, requesting the international community to contribute the necessary financial resources and technical assistance to the States concerned in order to enable them to carry out their national demining programmes.

My delegation attaches great importance to the question of enhancing the effectiveness of the First Committee's working methods. We encourage consultations and the search for consensus on this issue, and we view favourably all reform that does not undermine the rights of Member States to promote and defend their legitimate interests. In that context, we view positively, among other recommended measures, the institutionalization of interactive debates during which the Committee would benefit from the contributions of academic specialists and members of non-governmental organizations involved in disarmament issues.

We also endorse of the proposal to cluster similar agenda items, and we support the proposal to establish a mechanism for effectively following up on implementation of the decisions and resolutions adopted. Such a mechanism, if operational and effective, would contribute to strengthening the authority and credibility of the First Committee.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Paraguay, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, and to say how happy we are to see you in our midst once again. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Paraguay fully associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Brazil on behalf of the Rio Group on the first day of the First Committee's general debate. The delegation of Paraguay wishes to take this opportunity to add a few reflections on issues related to international security.

My delegation reaffirms that it believes multilateralism is the necessary and most suitable instrument for maintaining international peace and security: only through the collective efforts of all Member States can we ensure our mutual security. Paraguay supports the universal and regional instruments for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, underlines the efforts of the United Nations to ensure compliance with those instruments and supports the action of multilateral institutions responsible for verifying and maintaining compliance with those treaties.

Weapons of mass destruction have rightly become the focus of our attention. In that context, Paraguay fully shares the concern of other Member States that such weapons might spread and that they risk falling into the hands of non-State actors, with potentially disastrous consequences for humanity. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) would complement ongoing efforts to strengthen existing multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Paraguay believes that it is of the greatest importance to have the necessary cooperation, wherever required, for the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). It also believes that disarmament and non-proliferation cannot be addressed separately and that the two issues should be dealt with in the appropriate sphere of competence. We agree with the statement of the Secretary-General contained in his report on the work of the Organization with respect to the Conference on Disarmament:

> "Further progress is needed to ensure that the Conference will be able to resume its role of negotiating new arms control and disarmament agreements, with an emphasis on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The demonstrated ability of the Conference to devise disarmament treaties should be used to the fullest extent." (*A/59/1, para. 68*)

Paraguay is also concerned at the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and believes that responsibility for the fight against that scourge should be shared by all, both the manufacturing countries and the countries where the arms are sold. Paraguay is aware that the excessive accumulation of illicit small arms and light weapons, their uncontrolled proliferation and their wrongful use pose a grave threat to peace and stability in many regions of the world and entail humanitarian consequences at the national, regional and international levels. Paraguay supports the multilateral negotiations undertaken by the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and believes that an international instrument is essential to assist States in tackling the problem of the illicit arms trade.

In conclusion, the delegation of Paraguay underlines that, with the support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Paraguay is implementing the measures set out in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That collaboration has resulted in the destruction of firearms and ammunition in my country and the holding of training courses to prepare officials to combat that scourge.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Cameroon joins other countries in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, which is a tribute to your great diplomatic skills and experience, as well as recognition of the

highly appreciated contribution of your country, Mexico, to the consideration of disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Rest assured, Sir, of the full support of the delegation of Cameroon in the exercise of your functions.

Although arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are among the international community's greatest concerns, progress towards general and complete disarmament has been very slow. The survival of humankind continues to be threatened by the existence of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological. Those weapons are now coveted by terrorists and other, no less dangerous, actors.

The multilateral treaties prohibiting weapons of mass destruction most certainly give us a normative framework for disarmament and non-proliferation that should enable us, with determination, to make significant progress towards the total elimination of those weapons. Because it is a concern of all, it is in the interest of all countries for those obligations to be scrupulously respected.

But, although we have seen a worrisome regression in the implementation of those treaties in recent years, we must be vigilant in preserving the valuable achievements that have been made and, through appropriate and acceptable means, must close the legal loopholes in those instruments by extending their scope of application and by establishing effective verification and enforcement regimes.

We also need to continue promoting universality of accession to those collective disarmament instruments. Cameroon continues to believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are closely bound up together. Retaining nuclear arsenals and keeping nuclear weapons at the centre of security and defence strategies and doctrines do not protect any of the countries which possess such weapons from the old and new threats facing this world today.

We believe that the time has come for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We urge States not yet parties to the NPT to accede to it, and we urge those countries on whose signatures the CTBT's entry into force depends to sign and ratify it. Non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the NPT should be given security assurances to protect them from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Their right to have access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes should also be assured.

All over the world, and particularly in Africa, small arms and light weapons continue daily to kill thousands of civilians — most of them women and children. It is disturbing that the number of victims and the magnitude of losses caused by those arms continue to grow year by year. Also disturbing is the illicit trade in and proliferation of such arms, which criminal groups very often recycle from one arena of conflict to another or introduce into countries at peace, contributing to the spread of insecurity and the destabilization of entire regions. That is why Cameroon is particularly attentive to all disarmament efforts in Central Africa: we see the proliferation of, and the illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons in the subregion as a threat to its stability and security.

After the fruitful exchange of views that we had in the latest session of the Open-ended Working Group on marking and tracing, we look forward to studying the initial outline of an international instrument on the tracing of small arms and light weapons. The international community must promptly create a comprehensive and effective instrument in that regard. Cameroon supports all the consultation efforts under way with a view to taking new steps to strengthen international cooperation in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that regard, we are in favour of setting up a group of governmental experts as early as possible to consider that issue, which of course also dovetails with the question of tracing small arms and light weapons.

The first Review Conference of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention on landmines, to be held next month in Nairobi, will be an opportunity for a solemn renewal of our commitment to a world free of landmines, to review the achievements made and to assess what still needs to be done to implement the convention and make it universal.

Multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation policies are undoubtedly at a crossroads. There is need for decisive initiatives, particularly with regard to the stalemate in the work of the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. The debates under way on enhancing the effectiveness of the working methods of the First Committee are going in the right direction and are part of the overall

revitalization of the General Assembly. My country will be looking carefully at the various measures proposed and will state its views on them at the appropriate time.

On the regional and subregional levels, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which remains a valuable framework for confidence-building measures and disarmament in Central Africa, more than ever needs our support and our universal commitment to fund its activities in crucial areas such as bolstering the capacities of civil society and setting up the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which, together with the Standing Advisory Committee, has organized a number of workshops on small arms, is having financial difficulties. It is vital that Member States remain committed to Africa by providing those structures with the support necessary for them to accomplish their missions. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are categorical imperatives if we wish to enable future generations to live in a world free from the scourge of war, as we are exhorted to do by the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Al-Malki (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset, Sir, to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your skill and expertise, along with the cooperation of the other members of the Bureau, will enable you to guide our deliberations ably and successfully.

The issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) remains a cause of concern for the international community. That is particularly so if we take into account the slow pace of WMD dismantlement. In that connection, my country commends the steps taken by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to end its WMD programmes. We hope that this will encourage States which still seek to possess deadly WMDs to put an end to such programmes.

Even a cursory look at the current trends in world armament reveals that weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, exceed by far what is needed by States for their defence and security deterrence policies. That makes it necessary for us as States Members of the United Nations to intensify our efforts to develop machinery to eliminate that danger and to provide international guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States, prohibiting the use of such weapons against them.

The Kingdom of Bahrain supports United Nations efforts aimed at implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. These include cooperation among States in controlling the circulation of illicit weapons within States. We are concerned by the trade in such weapons. We fear that they may fall into the hands of groups that could not care less about the right to life, peace or tranquillity, and that might very well use those weapons to commit their terrorist acts and destabilize numerous States.

We can safely say that illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is almost non-existent in Bahrain. That is because my Government pays special attention to this phenomenon and combats it through the adoption of all necessary measures to limit small-arms proliferation. Among these is Decree 16 of 1976, which prohibits all trade in small arms and light weapons. It forbids the granting of licenses to trade in them under any circumstances and imposes a sentence of life in prison on violators. Here, my country supports the work of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The creation of zones free of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, has been the main factor fostering regional peace and security. Such zones have eased tensions and conflicts, something which the United Nations is trying to achieve. Therefore, the Kingdom of Bahrain continues to support international efforts to establish zones free of weapons of mass destruction, especially in the Middle East region, where Israel alone possesses nuclear weapons. That increases tension in the region and destabilizes regional peace and security at a time when there is a pressing need for peace and security in order to ensure peaceful coexistence among the States of the region.

The Kingdom of Bahrain strongly backs the efforts of the Secretary-General, in the framework of United Nations reform, to revitalize the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, with the intention of enhancing the effectiveness of Assembly

resolutions and helping United Nations bodies to discharge their responsibilities and tasks. That requires review of international peace and security issues in the light of the profound changes that have occurred in the concept of collective security.

We hope that improving the work of the First Committee will help us to achieve unity of opinion. We also hope to focus, first and foremost, on how to implement resolutions, not on reducing of nullifying their meaning. Those resolutions are designed to enhance international peace and security in all the regions of the world, including the Middle East.

Here, we would like to stress the need to implement United Nations disarmament resolutions and to implement all relevant agreements and treaties. That will engender a favourable international environment, where world peace and security will prevail. That in turn, will help us, as we embark on the third millennium, to build a humane and civilized society in which the spirit of love, harmony, prosperity, tranquillity and peace will reign.

Mr. Requeljo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Sir, let me express my pleasure at seeing you chairing our work.

In the current unipolar world, where it is increasingly necessary to preserve multilateralism in international relations, based upon strict respect for the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, the role of the First Committee continues to be highly relevant. While in this room statements are being made that would assure us that the cold war belongs to the past, in the real world military expenses continue to rise, owing in particular to the staggering growth of the super-Power's military budget. Hegemonism, direct or covert interventionism and insecurity for the weakest countries are becoming increasingly evident, as are attempts to validate the doctrine of the pre-emptive use of force. How could there fail to be advances if only a part of the colossal military expenses were allocated to finding solutions to the problems related to underdevelopment and to reducing the gap between the richest and the poorest countries?

Cuba firmly supports general and complete disarmament under strict international control and particularly supports the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as the highest priority, and of all weapons of mass destruction — mindful of the dangers for all mankind entailed by the mere existence of this kind of weaponry.

Attempts to increasingly focus the international community's attention on horizontal non-proliferation, to the detriment of nuclear disarmament, are contradictory if we consider that there are still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons endangering the very existence of mankind. The only safe and effective way to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is to eliminate them entirely.

It is evident that some nuclear Powers lack the political will required to achieve the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons forever. The outcome document of the forthcoming seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should contain practical commitments that will clearly reflect the responsibility and the role of the nuclear Powers in the advance towards nuclear disarmament, which should be carried out in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Cuba rejects the selective application of the NPT. Questions related to nuclear disarmament and to the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be considered as less important, while priority is given to horizontal non-proliferation. We cannot continue to postpone the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Cuban Government continues to take concrete steps which reflect its firm commitment to multilateralism and its political will to fulfil all its obligations undertaken as a State party to the NPT and to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. For instance, in November 2003, my country hosted the eighteenth regular session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), an event that concluded successfully with the adoption of a final document entitled the Havana Declaration. Likewise, on 27 May 2004, the Republic of Cuba ratified both the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its corresponding Additional Protocol.

On the issue of conventional weapons, we continue to share the concern at the terrible

humanitarian consequences of the unbridled proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

We are not opposed to banning the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines. But at the same time, when are we going to take real steps to prevent certain countries from continuing to develop and use increasingly sophisticated and deadly armaments? Little is said and almost nothing appears in the resolutions we adopt every year about such armaments, which cause so-called collateral damage, a phrase used to try to conceal the plight of innocent victims.

Cuba shares the concern about the risk involved in the link between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and we fully support all legitimate international efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring such weapons and their means of delivery. However, Cuba is profoundly concerned that the Security Council — whose limited composition is well known and some of whose members have the right of veto — continues to assume prerogatives and functions that do not belong to it, particularly in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. For example, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) relates to a topic that should continue to be considered in the framework of the traditional multilateral disarmament machinery, where there is an appropriate forum for the negotiation of a binding legal instrument.

International legal obligations — including those in the area of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation — should not be created for Member States without their full participation and their sovereign acceptance through the signing and ratifying of the relevant multilaterally negotiated treaties and agreements. The only guarantee that weapons of mass destruction will not fall into the hands of terrorists is the prohibition and total elimination of that kind of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons. The issue of proliferation in all its aspects should be resolved by political and diplomatic means within the framework of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Cuba rejects the manipulation or arbitrary interpretation of Council resolution 1540 (2004) by any military Power as a preauthorization of or a justification for the unilateral use of force against particular States on the basis of supposed suspicions of the proliferation of such weapons or of their components. That is particularly worrisome in the context of the accusations made by one of the permanent members of the Security Council against certain countries for supposedly developing programmes of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we note that high-ranking officials of the United States Government have repeatedly made totally false and unfounded accusations against my country, alleging — without producing any evidence — that Cuba possesses a limited capacity for research and development of biological weapons. We vigorously reject such accusations.

The possibility of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction cannot be eliminated by taking a selective approach, as promoted by the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which is limited to combating horizontal proliferation and which ignores vertical proliferation and disarmament. The PSI erodes multilateralism because, rather than contributing to international unity on the issue and strengthening the role of the United Nations and international disarmament and arms control treaties, it weakens them. Why is there such an attempt to impose a non-transparent mechanism of such selective composition, which acts outside the scope of the United Nations and those treaties, rather than addressing proliferation concerns on the basis of strict respect for the principles of international law and, above all, utilizing the multilateral legal framework of the treaties and mandates of the relevant international organizations?

By virtue of the PSI, it would even be possible to carry out actions contrary to key provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, such as those referring to the innocent passage of vessels through territorial waters of States and to the jurisdictional regime of the high seas embodied in the Convention. There would be no guarantee that the prerogatives arrogated to themselves by the States participating in the PSI could not be manipulated — particularly by its principal author and promoter — in order to take abusive action against other States' vessels and aircraft for various reasons.

The situation of the multilateral disarmament and arms control machinery is increasingly worrisome. The Conference on Disarmament continues to be paralysed. The Disarmament Commission could not even begin to consider substantive items this year. The First Committee continues to adopt draft resolutions that are often not complied with or implemented, particularly

those relating to nuclear disarmament. Remedying that situation requires renewed political support from the international community, particularly from countries that question the priorities established during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Cuba favours improving as much as possible the working methods of all United Nations bodies, including the First Committee, provided that that is not to the detriment of the right of all Member States to promote and defend their legitimate interests and that it does not affect, but rather strengthens, the key role played by the General Assembly within the Organization. One of the most grave problems affecting the work of the General Assembly as a whole, including the First Committee, is the lack of adequate follow-up mechanisms with regard to the implementation of the resolutions and decisions that are adopted.

The main difficulties faced by the First Committee do not stem primarily from the greater or lesser degree of effectiveness of its working methods, but from reasons of a political nature, particularly the lack of political will shown by some States to move forward on issues of key relevance to international peace and security, such as nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chidumo (Mozambique): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the affairs of the Committee. I am confident that your leadership, experience and wisdom will contribute to the successful outcome of our deliberations. I express similar congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Recent developments in the field of disarmament and international security continue to be a matter of concern to the international community. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1) outlines the challenges ahead and the way forward.

The highest negotiating body in the field of disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament, is yet to overcome the stalemate in which it finds itself, while several issues related to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) remain unresolved. These include the slow pace of disarmament, violations of non-proliferation commitments, evidence of a clandestine nuclear network and the threat of terrorism. The threat of terrorism and the international response to that evil have given rise to new concerns related to the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The fight against terrorism, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, requires broad-based international cooperation. We all agree on the imperative to safeguard these rights and freedoms.

We share the view that, to effectively tackle terrorism, we must address its root causes. Multilateralism and collective action in response to global concerns, within the framework of the United Nations, are fundamental, with a view to creating a climate of mutual trust and confidence.

The arms race, including the nuclear arms race, and non-compliance with relevant United Nations legal instruments have long been a source of concern and a source of insecurity, given the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. In the same vein, vertical and horizontal proliferation, including that of ballistic missiles, continues to be a matter of concern for international peace and stability. We therefore join in calling for the Conference of Disarmament to resume its duty of negotiating new arms control and disarmament agreements. We call also for the universalization of relevant existing international disarmament instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Conventions on Chemical and on Biological Weapons.

The Secretary-General has also alluded to the fact that violent internal conflicts continue to engulf millions of citizens around the world, drawing in neighbouring countries and thus posing an ever wider threat to international peace and security. Armed conflicts lead not only to increased military spending, but also to the widespread and uncontrolled availability of arms in the countries concerned. In addition, armed conflicts increase the availability of small arms and light weapons, which have a great potential to fuel criminal activities and the destabilization of countries.

Moreover, anti-personnel landmines, widely used during armed conflict, in addition to their lethal effects in killing and maiming innocent civilians, undermine post-conflict peacebuilding by impeding the use of land for development purposes. Moreover, while they are relatively affordable, huge financial resources are required to fund demining and to provide care to the victims.

For our part, we in Mozambique are still facing the effects of a war that ended 12 years ago. We still have millions of anti-personnel landmines across the country, and they adversely affect the resettlement of the population and the smooth resumption of vital economic activities. This is in addition to the availability of small arms and light weapons, which are mostly used in criminal activities and which contribute to insecurity.

For those reasons, Mozambique has been at the forefront of international action to curb both the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and of global efforts to ban anti-personnel landmines.

We view the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a critical step to minimize the easy availability and unlawful use of those arms, which pose a serious threat to the security, stability and development of poor countries. Also, we welcome the launching, in June 2004 at the United Nations, of multilateral negotiations on an international instrument to identify and trace illicit small arms, as a step towards devising the appropriate legal and political framework for international cooperation to eliminate the illicit trade and brokering of small arms and light weapons.

My Government supports the holding, from 29 November to 3 December 2004, of the Nairobi Summit for a Mine-Free World, a Review Conference that will provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen our resolve to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines. We sincerely hope that by then we will be drawing closer to realizing the dream of universalizing the Ottawa Convention, thus ensuring for good that the world will no longer experience the threat of anti-personnel landmines. In that connection, I would like to highlight the adoption at a ministerial meeting held last month in New York of a declaration on an African common position on anti-personnel landmines. I hope that the declaration will provide a valuable input to the Nairobi Summit.

I wish to underscore the need to strengthen international cooperation in the implementation of international instruments related to disarmament. In fact, in the area of conventional weapons, much is being done in developing countries to implement the commitments entered into, particularly actions to ban anti-personnel landmines and to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Affected countries, individually and collectively, through subregional and regional arrangements, have been making tremendous efforts to tackle the severe consequences of those weapons and to alleviate the suffering of their peoples. However, all those efforts will be ineffective and bound to fail if adequate international assistance is not rendered. We therefore call upon the international community to provide assistance to ensure the fulfilment of commitments made in the relevant international instruments. Finally, on the issue of reforms, we sincerely hope that these will reinforce the principle of providing better services to Member States, particularly those in need. Our aim is to see a strong United Nations that stands on the pillars of multilateralism, where each country can have a say on global issues. In that context, my delegation views the revitalization of the work of the First Committee as an exercise that can have a positive impact on the effectiveness of our work. Revitalization of the work of the First Committee must lead to the improvement of global security and the strengthening of multilateralism, with enhanced international cooperation towards general and complete disarmament and greater security and stability in the world.

Mr. Ovia (Papua New Guinea): Mr. Chairman, please allow me to join other speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead our Committee this year. I assure you of my delegation's support in ensuring a productive session.

We are living in unpredictable and trying times. On the one hand, we are witnessing great advances in high technology, especially information technology, which make it very easy instantly to communicate globally, and the overwhelming effects of globalization are bringing about many positive changes. On the other hand, we also see negative forces, including new threats and great vulnerabilities.

The First Committee provides a multilateral forum to deal with all those issues, among many others. However, my statement today will focus on a limited number of issues, including terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, the illicit use of small arms and light weapons and improvements in the working methods of the Committee.

As stated by my Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, the Right Honourable Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Papua New Guinea joins others in condemning in the strongest terms the recent killings of more than 330 people in cold blood in a school in Beslan; more than half of them were innocent children and women. That closely followed the loss of hundreds of others in the bombing of the Australia embassy in Jakarta, suicide bombings in Israel and Palestine, Madrid, Bali and Paris — and, of course, not to forget the horrendous incidents of 11 September 2001 in Washington and here in New York.

It is now more certain than ever that we live in an unsafe and unpredictable world where terrorists seem to roam at will. The international community, through the First Committee and the General Assembly, needs to find ways to minimize those threats and make our world a safer one again. The threat of terrorism is further exacerbated by that of weapons of mass destruction. It is indeed worrying to see evidence of terrorists seeking to obtain chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

As we are a small island country, lacking capacity and vulnerable to many of these growing security concerns, the increasing number of terrorist incidents and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are of great concern.

However, in addition to those two major issues, Papua New Guinea is also very concerned about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Those arms actually pose more of a danger to the general population of our country than weapons of mass destruction. In fact, one could say that small arms and light weapons can be considered our weapons of mass destruction; they cause more harm and kill and injure more of our people than weapons of mass destruction. That was the case, of course, in the conflict we witnessed in the past decade in the province of Bougainville.

Papua New Guinea therefore fully supports the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade in that category of weapons. We also fully support efforts to negotiate a global instrument to trace and monitor the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Our delegation is looking at ways in which we can effectively participate and contribute to that end. Perhaps we also need to look at reducing weapons at their sources of manufacture.

With respect to the issue of improving the working methods of the First Committee, small delegations such as ours have been greatly assisted by changing the way we organize our meetings; alternating between the First and the Fourth Committees, combining or reducing the number of draft resolutions, and doing away altogether with those deemed not necessary. As well, we are heartened by the valuable recommendations submitted to the Secretary-General on practical ways to improve the effectiveness of the work of the First Committee.

Finally, our delegation will endeavour to consult and work together with like-minded delegations in that regard. We also believe that this is a joint effort that will make our work more effective and participatory. After all, the negative effects of war, violence and destruction are felt by all around the globe.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): With the consent of the Committee, I shall now give the floor to the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mrs. Filip (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I would begin, Mr. Chairman, by joining others in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee on your election. I extend our best wishes for a fruitful and successful session under your able leadership.

I have asked to take the floor to address agenda item 70, Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. However, before doing so, and as a general observation, I shall begin by recalling that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as the world organization of national parliaments, has sought over past decades to make its own contribution to sustainable peace and international security in a variety of ways.

Most recently, for example, on the occasion of the 111th Assembly of the IPU, which was held in Geneva at the end of this past September, our First Standing Committee considered a report on the role of parliaments in strengthening international regimes for non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. The ensuing resolution, which has been distributed here in New York to United Nations Member States, identifies a series of ways and means by which parliaments can work at the national level, as well as internationally, among themselves and with the United Nations, in order to pursue those goals, with a particular focus on

compliance and implementation of commitments undertaken.

Next week, here at United Nations Headquarters, we will be holding the annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations. As a follow-up to the Geneva decisions, we look forward to an interactive exchange with senior United Nations officials and representatives of the diplomatic community on questions relating to non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control.

Returning to agenda item 70, on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, in 1991 the Inter-Parliamentary Union set up a process to promote security and cooperation in that region, consisting of a series of conferences and meetings that was quickly baptized the CSCM process: the conferences on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

In so doing, the IPU built upon a long and rich experience of activities to promote rapprochement, particularly in the context of the work it had carried out to reduce East-West tensions during the 1970s and 1980s through its own parliamentary Helsinki process, which was initiated several years before the actual Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process got under way. In that effort, the IPU had several clear assets. The parliaments of all countries in the Mediterranean area and those of the countries directly involved in the region were all represented in it, in the full diversity of their political spectrum. Over the years, their representatives had woven a network of political and human relations simply by working together. It was that familiarity within an institution like our own, combined with the flexibilities that parliamentary contacts and diplomacy offer, which made it possible to develop a process seeking to realize the Mediterranean ideal.

The CSCM process aims to develop a comprehensive regional policy — drawn up with the participation of all States in the region and for the benefit of all — and to lay the foundations for that process at both the intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary levels. The CSCM is intended as a meeting place where, in a climate of security and stability, a genuine cultural dialogue and a partnership designed to ensure the balanced growth of the region can develop. The CSCM is not aimed at directly tackling existing conflicts, but is conceived rather as a permanent mechanism for dialogue and negotiation, to generate positive momentum and facilitate the settlement of such disputes.

One original feature of the process is the formula of a layered participation, which includes both main participants and three categories of associate participants. That formula was adopted to take into account the political conditions particular to the region, and especially to allow for involvement by representatives from countries that do not have a Mediterranean coastline. Thus, the parliaments of all the littoral States participate as members alongside those of Jordan, Portugal and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, whereas those with significant interests in the region — Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — take part in the process as associate members, as do Palestine and several intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations active in the Mediterranean.

The IPU set up three baskets to examine all questions relating to the Mediterranean: regional stability; co-development and partnership; and dialogue among civilizations and human rights. While those categories are clearly inspired by the similar CSCE process, there are also important differences. In the CSCE human rights were linked to political issues, whereas in the Mediterranean they are linked to dialogue among civilizations.

Since its inception, the CSCM has held three Inter-Parliamentary Conferences; in Malaga, Spain, in 1992; in Valletta, Malta, in 1995; and in Marseilles, France, in 2000. The CSCM has also held eight thematic meetings and maintains an ongoing consultative process at the IPU Statutory Assemblies, which take place twice a year. Throughout its now 13-year-old process, CSCM participants have made a great many proposals to lower tensions in the region and to identify areas where cooperation can be advanced. It has inspired many similar processes and has provided important ideas and building blocks for the Barcelona process.

The CSCM process has also worked to establish Mediterranean institutions for cooperation and security. Specifically, it has suggested that States establish a parliamentary assembly of the Mediterranean. At a meeting of the CSCM process held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in March 2002, participants adopted by

consensus a document setting out the fundamental characteristics of a future parliamentary assembly of the Mediterranean. Since then, draft statutes for that Assembly have been drawn up.

As I mentioned, earlier this month the IPU concluded its one hundred and eleventh Assembly. On that occasion the Union decided to organize a fourth and final CSCM conference in early 2005, in Greece. While the conference will signify the end of the CSCM process within the IPU, it will also signify the creation of the first truly Mediterranean political institution: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. We are confident that that new institution, the first truly Mediterranean one, will play a significant role in strengthening security and cooperation in the region. We stand ready to work closely with that Assembly, as we do with many other regional parliamentary bodies, such as the newly established Pan-African Parliament, in making an effective and meaningful contribution to world peace and security.

Programme of work

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): In the light of consultations over the past two days, it would appear desirable, that, as soon as we have completed the list of speakers in the general debate, that we should begin our interactive dialogue, taking advantage of the presence of Under-Secretary-General Abe. With respect to the informal note that I circulated a few days ago, we do not expect the participation of any other actors in that exercise. It will just be Under-Secretary-General Abe and the representatives of Governments.

This will take place in an informal format, but in open meetings. To clarify, "informal meeting" means that the meeting will not be recorded, but the conference room will not be closed: our dialogue will not be held in private. I intend to follow that formula also for the other stages of the informal discussion.

I would also like to refer to the content of document A/C.1/59/CRP.2, and to reiterate what I said a few days ago: that I intend to divide the thematic segment into three phases so that the Committee can make the best possible use of the time allocated to it in this segment.

The first phase of the segment will be formal, so that delegations wishing to do so may speak on all of the topics on the timetable established in document A/C.1/59/CRP.2. The second phase will be informal, along the same lines that I have indicated for tomorrow's meeting. That is to say, there will be no recording of what is discussed, but the meeting will not be closed. It will be a public meeting. The third phase of the process, once again, will be a formal, official meeting so as to have a record of the introduction of draft resolutions.

The idea of the interactive dialogue is that we should be able to take up both general issues relating to the question under consideration and matters relating to all the draft resolutions that will be presented to the Committee for consideration under the thematic segment.

In preparing the indicative timetable and the specific distribution of items, I would like to point out that we have followed the customary practice of the Committee at previous sessions of the General Assembly. I would propose the following order: on Monday, 18 October, we will take up matters relating to nuclear weapons; on 19 October, our meeting will be devoted to other weapons of mass destruction and outer space (disarmament aspects); on Wednesday and Thursday, 20 and 21 October, we will address matters relating to conventional weapons; and in the morning and afternoon meetings on Friday, 22 October, we will take up regional disarmament and security, confidence-building measures, other measures relating to disarmament and disarmament mechanisms, and related matters of disarmament and international security, including education on non-proliferation and international security.

This year, in contrast with past practice, I have allocated two meetings to the debate on conventional weapons, at the request of Ambassador Thalmann of Switzerland, so that he can hold informal consultations on the work of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Given that timetable and the three-phase format proposed, I hope the Committee will accommodate some of the recommendations that the Committee itself made at its previous session and that the Assembly made in resolution 58/316. I hope that we will also put to the test many of those mechanisms with a view to their permanent adoption or their improvement.

I therefore urge all delegations to regard this exercise as one that is still subject to many

adjustments. We should carry it out with great flexibility — bot by the Chair and by delegations — as members use the various formats to state their positions. I hope that the outcome will demonstrate its viability and usefulness for the future.

In the absence of objection, may I take it that the Committee decides to proceed in accordance with the indicative timetable set out in document A/C.1/59/CRP.2?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.